

Vulnerable Adults Working Group
June 14, 2011, 9:30-11:00 a.m. @ Shriver Center on Poverty Law
Meeting Minutes

1. **Introductions- In attendance-** *Chair-Dan Lesser, Shriver Center, Mark Ishaug, Aids United, Tracy Smith, Feeding Illinois, Jessica Rhoades, Shriver Center, Bob Gallo, AARP, Kate Maehr, Greater Chicago Food Depository, **Via Telephone-** Terry Solomon, African-America Family Commission, Betsy Creamer (representing Rance Carpenter IL Dept of Aging), Jan Freeman, DHS.*
2. **Working Group Jurisdiction-** *People with disabilities including those with chronic medical conditions, older adults (age 50+), and working age adults (18-65) including the unemployed and working poor. In regards to working age adults the Vulnerable Adults Working Group will take more of an urban focus since the Underserved Working Group is looking at rural populations working age adults.*
3. **Defining the Issues and Goals of Working Group**
 - *Review of existing food and nutrition programs that serve vulnerable adults*
 - *Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP, formerly food stamps); administered by IDHS (Jan Freeman)*
 - ***Discussed just-implemented IDHS policy change in medical deduction policy- SNAP households with a qualifying member (senior or disabled) who can verify monthly medical expenses of at least \$35 will receive standard medical deduction of \$245. These SNAP households will receive \$30-50 per month of additional benefits. Cost offset by reducing standard deduction for all households by \$4, which will reduce most households' benefits by \$1.***
 - *TEFAP(The Emergency Food Assistance Program – Commodity Food); administered by IDHS (Penny Roth)*
 - *CACFP (Child and Adult Care Food Program - Kids and Adults Over 65); adult portion administered by Department on Aging*
 - *CSFP (Commodity Supplemental Food Program – Cook, East St. Louis and 7 Southern Illinois Counties); Cook County administered by Catholic Charities
 - *96% of the people served are 60 years or older with incomes at or below 130% of the federal poverty level; certain postpartum women and young children also served (6-12 months)**
 - *Older American's Act – Congregate Meals Program and Home Delivered Meals Program; administered by Department of Aging.*
 - *Seniors' Farmers Market-voucher program; administered by IDHS (Penny Roth)*

- *Local Programs*
 - *Non-profit v faith based privately funded programs*
 - *Food desert initiatives- Jim Galloway-Building a Healthier Chicago*
- *Review to ensure we identified all existing programs*
 - *Human Services Commission Report – Section on Hunger – Matt to scan to see if we missed anything*
 - *General Accounting Office report released in April 2010 had a list of federal programs – Matt to scan to see if we missed anything*
- **Future issues for work group**
 - *No programs specifically for disabled including those with chronic medical conditions*
 - *Lack of access to high quality food- including fresh and nutritious foods*
 - *Geographic (food deserts)*
 - *Income*
 - *Access to Existing Programs - Underutilized*
 - *Staff shortages & increased need has led to huge caseloads that impact:*
 - *Amount of assistance provided when completing the application*
 - *Timeliness of processing applications and redeterminations*
 - *Onerous eligibility verification requirements*
 - *Communication Issues – failure to communicate in a timely manner, language barriers, and confusing and unclear communications*
 - *Particular impact on SNAP redetermination*
 - *Eligibility rules themselves - whether they're too restrictive*
 - **Political & Public Support**
 - *Backlash on the federal safety net – need to build support for programs among public and legislators*
 - *Inaccurate information and perceptions about recipients of benefits.*
 - *Opportunity to “tell the story” and challenge conventional wisdom*
 - *Need to educate that it is not welfare it's a relief program. That should be the messaging that we use to educate.*
 - *Need to make the connection between obesity and hunger*
 - **Budgets at the state, federal and municipal levels**
 - *Limits on resources, which leads to unmet needs.*
 - *Ryan block grant proposal for SNAP would reduce funding by 18%, a \$500M annual loss to IL, and fundamentally alter structure of program to make it unresponsive to future increased need.*
 - **New Groups in need**
 - *Redetermination-looking at eligibility versus simplification*
 - *Lack of awareness of programs for people who find themselves in need who have never had to access services*
 - *New generation of people eligible for food programs, who need to tell their story.*
 -
 - **Goals**
 - *Prioritize issues and solutions*
 - *Make recommendations to the full Commission*

- *Release a report with a 2-year plan for reducing hunger in Illinois in March 2012*

4. How to reach our goals

- *Recommend changes in state law and program administration*
- *Recommend changes in federal law and administration*
 - *Farm Bill is scheduled to be reauthorized in 2012; already hearings*
- *Encourage Collaborations and Finding Common Ground*
 - *Alignment between private, public and government partners*

Public Education

Media

5. Formal process of making recommendations to the full Commission-

Working Group will make recommendations to the full commission based on the populations the working group is targeting. Looking to develop a strategy and timeline on when these recommendations should be made to the Illinois General Assembly with an eye on making sure the timing is right for both us and the legislature.

6. Suggestions for other Potential Partners to the Working Group

- *Individuals who have joined the WG: Bob Gallo AARP, Debbie Hinde Vital Bridges*
- *Individuals to reach out to – want potential partners to come ready to educate the group*
 - *Access Community Health Network, Linda Diamond Shapiro- Mark will approach*
 - *Equip for Equality, Barry Taylor-Mark will approach*
 - *Age Options, Jonathan Lavin - Matt*
 - *Area Agency Association, Julie Hubbard is current president - Betsy will ask Julie who would be best to represent this group*
 - *Women Employed – Anne Ladky or Melissa Josephs – Mark will call*

7. Future Meetings- What we will be doing in future meetings.

- ***Data-*** *that which is existing & also data that has not yet been gathered.*
- ***Presentations from experts, e.g, on results of AARP's current hunger survey***
- ***Listening Tour-*** *Looking to target Commissioners, elected officials, media and key stakeholders. Developing one page description on what the Listening Tour will consist of. Want to shape tour dates around legislators and the legislature's recess dates.*
 - ***Media-*** *define the role they will play in the listening tour.*
 - ***9th Congressional District (Jan Schakowsky):*** *Listening tour stop will take place in a pantry that serves older adults. There will be a tour of the facility and then a roundtable discussion.*
 - ***Profiles of participants we might want***
 - *Pantry Coordinator*
 - *SNAP Worker*
 - *Clients of the Program- have them tell their story.*
 - *Retailer*
 - *Success stories – individuals who received benefits but no longer do*

- ***DuPage County***
 - *Hunger has exploded*
 - *Hidden face of hunger in DuPage (newly hungry)*
 - *Powerful state and federal legislative district – try to find cross over between Biggert and Cross.*